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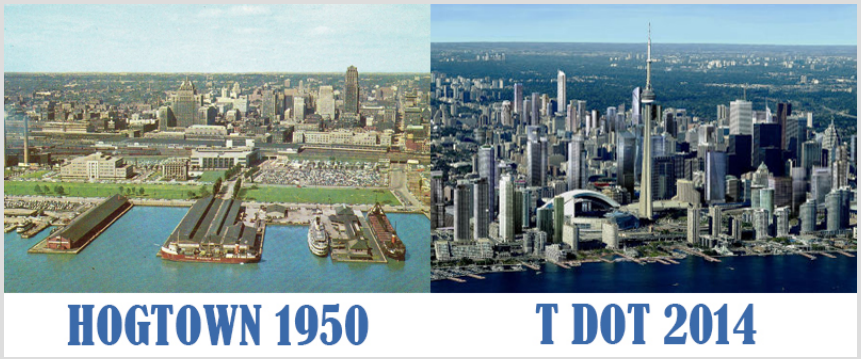
MONTREAL SUCKS AND EVERYONE KNOWS IT

POSTED BY MAXWELL TURNER ON JAN 10, 2014 IN **RANTS**

The land of no opportunities, a city the world forgot

Everyone from this once glorious waste of a cosmopolitan metropolis likes to boast about how there's so much culture and so many interesting things to do, but it's all a lie. The only reason why there are seemingly unending festivals all year is because **people are miserably bored and all they can afford to do is party on the weekends to drown their sorrows with booze and drugs,** while they cope with the fact that if they moved to Toronto they'd make twice as much money and enjoy pretty much the same cultural joys. Montreal used to be the centre of Canada long ago. But compared to its western neighbour (which has slowly been luring away multi-national corporation HQs since the 1990s) it has seen little growth in the past fifty years save for the golden hey-days between 1960 - 1974, when the city was a shining jewel in North America and a top destination by worldly travellers.



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The city is home to a rich, booming arts scene. I guess when all other prospects for industry is dismal, you might as well slap a coat of fresh paint over the deepening surface cracks and pretend everything is rosey. Cheap rent will make any city attractive to people who want to dive into their art and not have to work on the side. Bedbugs is just something you'll have to live with. Even just on paper, this city is a shitshow; of the 22 cities in North America with a centralized population over 2 million, Montreal is the poorest and it also has half of the Canadian average entrepeneurship per capita. This is mostly because **the city's and province's regulations and taxing system seem to be intentionally designed to scare away businesses and investors.** Montreal's top income earners pay **48.22% personal tax**. Yes, Toronto pays almost as much (at 47.22%) but in Montreal, that number just went up by 1.75% and kicks in at only $100,000 annual income. This means almost every skilled professional falls in the top tax tier and is easily deterred from living here.

> *"I grew up being a socialist and I have problems with it because I grew up in Canada [and] I've spent a lot of time in Scandinavia, where I believe countries legislate out creativity. They cut off the tall trees. Everyone's a C-minus. I came to America from Canada because Canada is stultifyingly boring and incredibly hypocritical. Thanks, Canada."*
>
> Vice co-founder and ex-Montrealer **Shane Smith**, who left Montreal in 1998 for Brooklyn, taking Vice with him, and never looked back.

Inadequate Infrastructure

Seriously though, the infrastructure here is decrepit and only getting worse, up to par with the likes of communist Cuba. **Spending to keep people safe seems to be low on the priority list**, and they can barely maintain Canada's busiest domestic bridge. I mean, you could be minding your own business walking to class and then:

Sinkhole on Saint Catherine.

Followed by a flock of idiots that swarm the abyss trying to get a closer look, with local blogs and news stations alike thinking this'll be the story that warrants their existence. Astonishingly, this was in the middle of a university campus at one end of the city's main shopping strip. This mere weeks apart from another incidient where a man was minding his own business when, out of a scene from Looney Tunes, a ton of metal, (a sheet of metal weighing a ton), fell on him. Just another day in Montreal. Or you could also be driving along, heading home in the suburbs when this happens:

Whoops; the roads have a bit of an appetite. They're probably pissed because they don't seem to have been repaved in a while. Construction here likes to cut corners in order for exorbitant public-works

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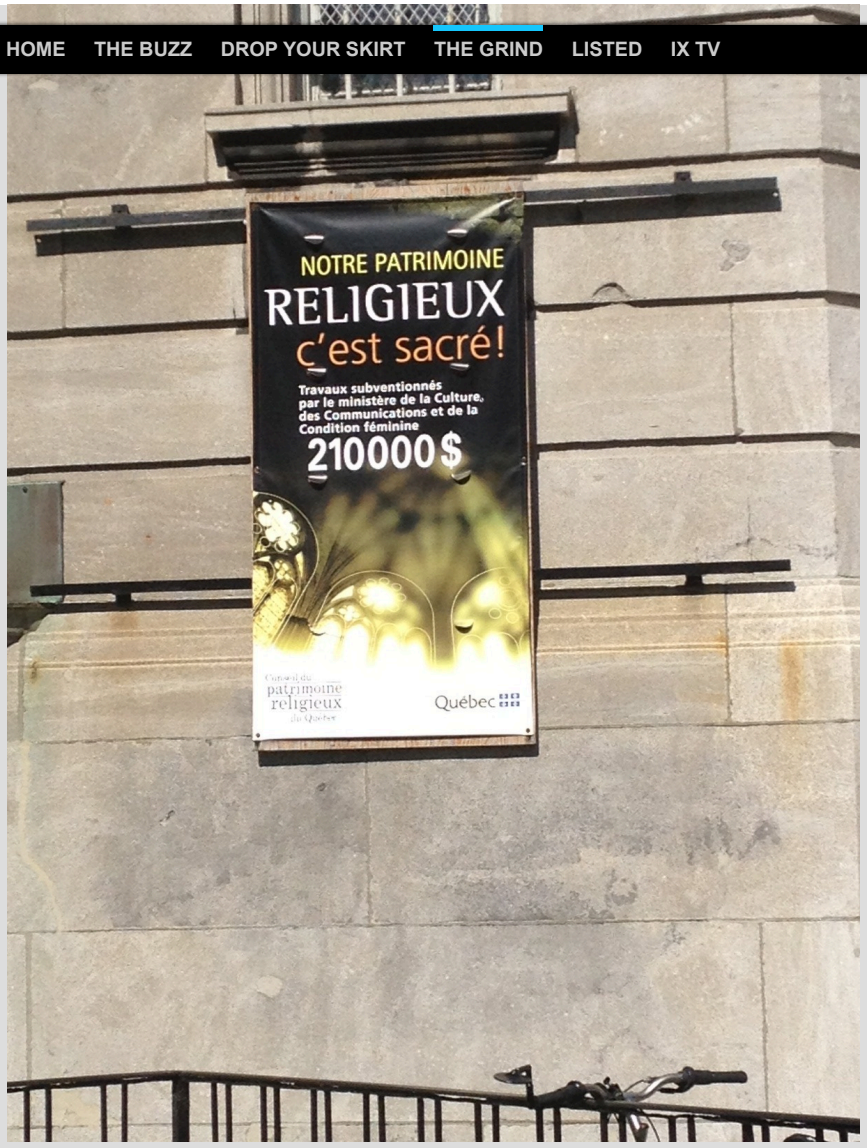
contracts to come sooner; and it's not borderline criminal, it's **actually criminal behaviour**. There are

mayors were canned after kick-back allegations they blatantly admitted to.

Say what you will about Toronto's crackhead mayor **Rob Ford**, but to be honest you know a city is on the up-and-up when a complete clown can run a booming megapolis with gusto. Meanwhile, the mob-infested construction industry in this city is responsible for naming Canada the country with the most corrupt industries in the world. **It's all your damn fault, Montreal**. You should probably stage a protest about it. You really love to stick it to the man.

Civil Unrest

There's honestly so many protests here that people stuck in traffic have stopped caring. The protesters fail to understand that **nobody knows what they're protesting.** Is it tuition, is it Plan-Nord, is it the Charter of Values, who knows any more? Which brings us to the unavoidable topic of the Charter of Values. This province actually plans on firing all public sector employees who wish to wear a religious symbol claiming that they want to be a secular state. Meanwhile they promote projects like this:



The issue here isn't that the government is spending $210,000 to restore a church. It's a gorgeous historic building that should be preserved and the project will create jobs. It's that the sign advertising it translates to **"Our religious heritage is sacred to us."** So really how *secular* do you want to be Québec? They're actually restoring the church so that new converted Catholics can burn down their Synagogues and start attending mass.

Have you tried finding a family doctor in this city? Expect a minimum two years wait. Even going to the hospital can be a struggle if you live in the wrong neighbourhood for your language of preference. It goes both ways on that one, French and English can be dis-serviced, and they don't let you visit a regular doctor outside of your borough. I don't mind that all my medical services take place in English now, I speak French well enough, but the fact that I live equally close to an English speaking hospital but have been refused service there is extremely upsetting.

Don't start talking about the police here, they'll arrest you for sitting under a tree, and they like to threaten to tie homeless men to poles in extremely cold weather. If you're having some post-party McDicks's, they might even punch you in the face. I once had a police officer start writing me a ticket for J-walking, then when I switched back to speaking French he said, "Oh, I thought you were only English, just don't do it in front of an officer again." He literally was going to fine me until he found out I could speak French. Which brings us to the language issues in this messed up province.

Stifling Language Issue & Profiling

#Pastagate was a thing. They are so strict about the use of French here that when an Italian lounge used "Pasta" in lieu of "pâtes alimentales" they faced a fine. This story propelled the language issues into the national spotlight. Establishments in areas where you'd be hard pressed to find a francophone customer have to hire French-speaking employees because if the language police came in, the business would be heavily fined. Language police are a thing here. How fascist is it that the government puts such an extreme emphasis on policing what language you choose to use? And in their eyes, it's for the greater good of the state.

#Pastgate

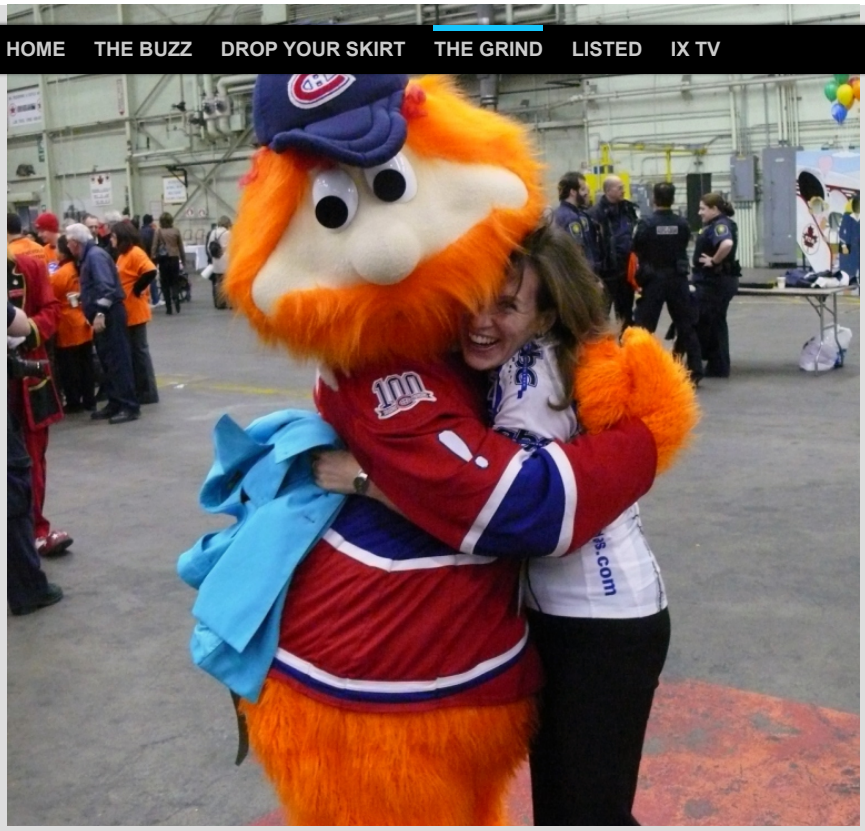
Of any major city, this is where I've experienced the most continuous racism. In Toronto and even New York, people don't try to guess what neighbourhood you live in like they do in Montreal. Maybe that's because there are minorities living everywhere in those cities. Any city in the world you'll have people ask, "where are you from?" hoping to learn about your background; that's just a universal condition that comes with being coloured. In Montreal though, they like to know what neighbourhood you live in, and sometimes people will act genuinely surprised when you don't say that you're from Saint-Michel or Montreal-Nord if you look remotely coloured. That's never happened to me in New York. Nobody anywhere in that city has ever suggested that I should live in a specific neighbourhood; people are free to live wherever they want. Here in Montreal, **a third of the population is said to be a visible minority, but you could never tell from walking the downtown streets.** It's literally like they've

ghettoized everyone to the outer boroughs of the city to maintain a pristine condition for the white people

The sad truth is that despite the diversity of cultures present, which is mostly attributed to the cheap and prominent (even that is debatable lately) education system at the university level, the city does not offer enough to sustain interest once one's studies are complete. In this light, the tuition riots seemed to barely be about tuition at all-- instead it was a lashing out by local youth who knew that getting a job after their degree meant years of unpaid internships and no secure employment in sight. Not only do the majority of graduates from outside of Montreal end up leaving the city, but those born and raised in Montreal see little choice but to pack it in and go down the 401, or risk suffering unstable, low-paying jobs while being taxed to the death. Taxes that go to pay for this guy's yacht.

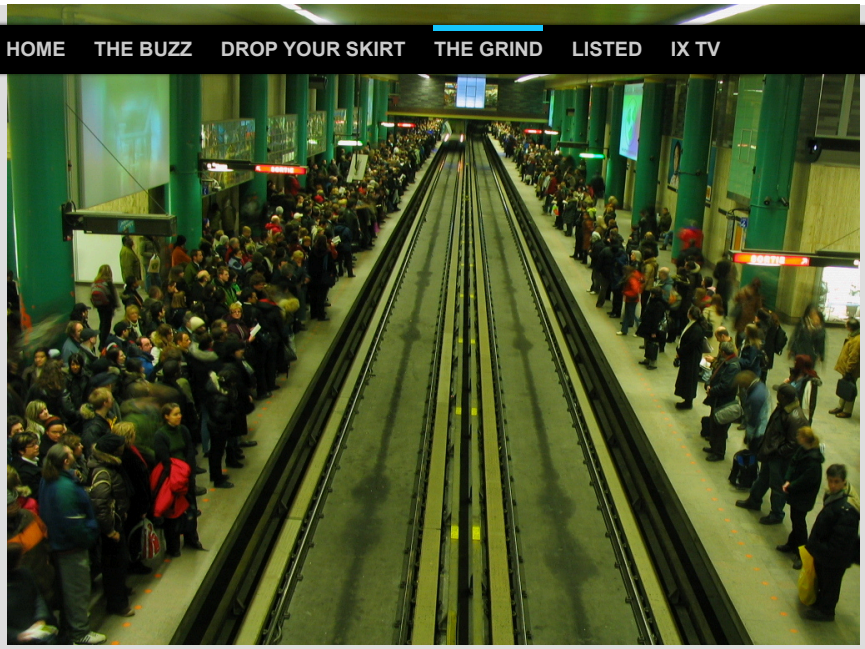
Big City, Small Town Mentality

Then you have that which les Montréalais hold in the highest honour: **les Canadiens**. The team that has been nothing but mediocre for years is still an extreme source of pride in a sport that is probably 4th most popular of the Big Four. Sure, they are better than the Maple Leafs, but they're not top notch. Although this year they're having a pretty good season, so maybe we can hope for some kind of crowning comeback (which will cost the city money it doesn't have if 1993 was any barometer). Let's ignore the fact that the city's football team comes and goes like a sideshow, or that we couldn't keep a major league baseball team firmly embedded in the hearts and minds of citizens (we're talking about the **Montreal Expos--** if the name gives you any indication as to when they were conceived). We like to forget that the Allouettes don't even use the stadium anymore because the roof has been broken for years and doesn't open. But we do have a team with animalistic, two-faced fans that will beat you up in a bar when your favourite team is victorious. **You can see tourists and locals alike wearing Bruins or Leafs memorabilia being verbally harassed almost any day of the week** with language that they certainly wouldn't use in front of their mothers. Never mind, their Québécois mothers can probably hold their own in a swear-off. At least Youppi is adorable.



The other day I was on the metro talking to friends politely about school when two elderly women started making comments about the "stupid English that have infested their city" and how they "wish Québec would return to being exclusively for the French." They were shocked when four out of the five of us responded in English and told them to keep their opinions to themselves or at least lower their volume so we didn't need to hear it. It would be fine if incidents like this were localized, but they happen every day in this city.

Speaking of the metro, I actually enjoy that it's blistering hot in the winter months. Too bad that means that during the summer all you can smell is arm pit as there isn't enough anti-antiperspirant in the world to tame the sweat after spending five minutes underground. At least the system makes sense I suppose, except people don't seem to grasp the idea of letting people get off the train before you board. **I nearly get tackled getting off the subway at Berri-UQAM almost everyday**. I was once pushed back onto the train and forced to ride to the next stop because one not-so-gentle man rushed the doors as soon as they opened. The doors aren't going to close on you; how is it that everyone lines up politely for the bus, but tries to turn the subway platform into a mosh pit?



Delusions of Grandeur

The metro and it's very pleasant train system connects the sprawling neighbourhoods to one another; it's definitely needed because traffic in this city is a nightmare at best. What's funny though is how every borough thinks that they're better than the next, as in any city. But they're not any better really. The girls in LaSalle think they're somehow classier than the girls from St-Laurent, who think they're better than the girls from Saint Leo, who think they're a more colorful bunch than the chicks from the West-Island. They all 'go hard' with equal amounts of no class at all. I won't get started on the exceptionally tacky, unfathomably horny bunch that flood in from off-island.

It's no wonder **Montreal is considered one of the porn capitals of the world.** There's talent hiding in every corner of every bar and there's more than enough people with little to no other job opportunities. When in doubt, you might as well open up a strip club on the corner because there will be no shortage of dancers, and no shortage of customers looking to warm up or ask for the back room treatment.

I secretly like the winter here, which is only because you're somewhat close to ski hills and if you can

make it feel like someone is throwing razor blades at your face while giving you a lobotomy. It's never a question of, "will I fall on the way to work this morning?" but rather, **"how many times will I fall on my way to work today?"**

Well, there are some diamonds in the rough I suppose. Keep partying strong Montreal, and keep convincing yourself that the laid-back high energy vibe of the city is actually productive and good for the city as a whole. But if I get invited to one more after party on the basis that "**Arcade Fire** is hosting it" and then have to endure three hours of the the most hipster-pretentious conversations imaginable, I might be provoked to violence. So there it is, you can whine about it if you want but we're all stuck here, just trying making the best of the city we call home.

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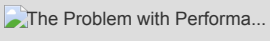

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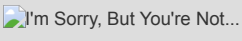

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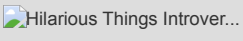

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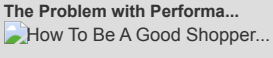

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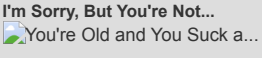

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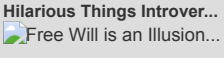

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